

THE RAM AND THE GOAT (Part 2)

Daniel 8:1-27 (vv. 23-27)

AiM 9/25/2026

Structure:

- I. The Content of the Vision (1-14)*
- II. The Interpretation of the Vision (15-27)*

LAST TIME:

Key Questions to Understand Daniel's Vision of the Ram and the Goat

- *Who is the Ram? (8:3-4, 20) MEDO PERSIA*
- *Who is the Goat? (8:5-8a, 21) GREECE*
- *Who is the Large Horn? (v. 5b, 8a, 21b) ALEXANDER THE GREAT*
- *Who are the Four Horns? (8:8b, 22) THE "DIADOCHI"*
- *Who is the Small Horn? (8:9-14,) ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES
PREFIGURING ANTICHRIST*

Key Factors that Argue for Antiochus Epiphanes as the Small Horn of Dan. 8:

- a. He comes from **Greece** (not Rome)*
- b. He parallels the 'despicable person' of Dan. 11:21 who is the successor to Antiochus the Great.*
- c. He will set up the abomination of desolation in the temple (an act which corresponds to Antiochus' blasphemous sacrificing of a pig in the temple)*
- d. The historical timeline of the cleansing of the temple during the Maccabean Revolt makes perfect sense of "the 2,300 days" in Dan. 8:14*

HOWEVER...there are key factors that compel us to view this ALSO as a PROPHETIC PREFIGURING of The Antichrist:

- a. Dan. 8:17 and 19 state that this vision "pertains to the time of the end", a phrase that points to THE ESCHATOLOGICAL END.*
 - *In the OT, there are four other uses of "the time of the end" (Dan. 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9). They all appear in Daniel's final vision and point to a distant future when the Antichrist will be defeated, a resurrection will take place for God's people to everlasting life, and Christ will WIN (12:1-2). (cf. Hassler, p. 37).*
- b. Jesus speaks of the Abomination of Desolation ("spoken of by the prophet Daniel") as a future event related to His 2nd Coming and thus The Antichrist (Matt. 24:15).*
- c. Dan. 11:21-35, which clearly describe Antiochus, undergoes a "leap forward" in 11:36 to describe the Antichrist of the End Times ("prophetic foreshortening").*

Conclusion: *these prophecies, although partially fulfilled by Antiochus, await a future fulfillment in "the time of the end" (thus, the events of ch. 8 **prefigure** The Antichrist).*

[INTRO]

Turn your Bibles and your attention to Daniel chapter 8.

REVIEW

- Daniel sees a vision of a Ram and a Goat
- The Ram is Medo-Persia
- The Goat is Greece
- The Goat's "large horn" is Greece's first king, *Alexander the Great*
- But that large horn was broken as soon as it became powerful
- In its place grew four horns – these represent the four generals that split up the Greek Empire into four regions.
- And from one of those four kings there emerged one king that would have a uniquely significant impact on the People of Israel.
- This is the "Small Horn" that emerges in vv. 9-14.
 - ***What does he do?*** Exalts himself and persecutes God's people!
- Last time I showed you that this Small Horn represents two prophetic realities:
 - Specifically, it is **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**
 - Who prophetically **prefigures** the final Apocalyptic Antichrist

Tonight, we're going to zoom in on the final verses of this chapter which are a prophecy about the rise and fall of this figure, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

It's going to be an incredible lesson in history.

About a chapter of history that many of you are probably not familiar with.

Because it took place in the 400 years of silence between the OT and NT – the "intertestamental period".

But this is CRUCIAL period of Israel's history that helps us greatly understand God's dealings with Israel.

And it also helps us understand the Jewish world into which Jesus the Messiah entered when He came to earth in His first coming.

On our Timeline, we're going to zoom in to "The Hasmonean Period".
[TIMELINE SLIDE]

→ Cyrus King of Persia decrees to rebuild the Temple in 538 BC (Ezra 1:1-4)

So tonight, will be fascinating history lesson.

BUT far more than just a history lesson, I pray that the overarching lesson tonight is the sovereignty of God!

That we would MARVEL, not only at His **sovereign power**, but also at His sovereign CARE for His people.

So this is to bolster our TRUST in Him!

He WILL fulfill all His promises *to the detail!*

Let's pick up reading in **v. 15 thru the end.**

- 15 Now it happened when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who had the appearance of a man.
- 16 And I heard the voice of a man between *the banks of* Ulai, and he called out and said, "Gabriel, give this *man* an understanding of what has appeared."
- 17 So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was terrified and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end."
- 18 Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright.
- 19 Then he said, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will happen at the final period of the indignation, for *it* pertains to the appointed time of the end.
- 20 "The ram which you saw with the two horns is the kings of Media and Persia.
- 21 "Now the shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

- 22 “And the broken *horn* and the four *horns that* stood in its place *are* four kingdoms *which* will *take their* stand from *his* nation, although not with his power.
- 23 “In the latter period of their reign,
When the transgressors have run *their course*,
A king will stand,
Insolent and skilled in intrigue.
- 24 “His power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power,
And he will destroy to an astonishing degree
And succeed and do *his will*;
He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.
- 25 “And through his insight
He will cause deceit to succeed by his hand;
And he will magnify *himself* in his heart,
And he will destroy many while *they are* at ease.
He will even stand against the Prince of princes,
But he will be broken without hands.
- 26 “And what had appeared about the evenings and mornings
Which has been told is true;
But as for you, conceal the vision,
For *it* pertains to many days *in the future*.”
- 27 Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I rose up *again* and did the king’s work; but I was appalled at what had appeared, and there was none to make *me* understand *it*.

Incredible portion of God’s Word!

But it clearly was hard for Daniel to grasp! He says that he struggled with it and none could make him understand it.

Just a couple of comments on that.

This doesn’t mean that God’s revelation here is **unclear**.

In fact, God makes much of the vision SUPER clear.

For example, He explicitly reveals by NAME that the Ram is Medo-Persia and the Goat is Greece (v. 20).

And He specifically reveals that the Large Horn on the Goat represents the first king of Greece (v. 21).

So much of the vision is very clear.

Daniel is just describing the reality that from his standpoint in time, it was difficult to understand how these things would play out.

And what it would mean for God's people!

Remember, Daniel's anticipation was that God would deliver His people!

This was based on God's promises in His Word that Daniel was trusting!

But what God is showing Daniel in this vision clearly is that *before things get better, they will get worse. Much worse.*

So when Daniel says none could make him understand the vision, I believe he is talking about understanding the specifics of how these things would unfold.

And specifically, I think he was struggling the identity and events surrounding this "Small Horn".

While it may be easier for us to look back over history and connect the dots, from Daniel's standpoint, it was hard to imagine how this would play out.

But we can look back over history and see how this prophecy was fulfilled just as expected.

But many of you are probably unfamiliar with this chapter of history.

I was too before this study.

But it is a very significant part of Israel's history—important for us to know.

And once you begin to study it, the fulfillment of this prophecy becomes clear in those events!

We're going to turn our attention to it now.

First let's get a bit of a biographical sketch of **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**.

The way we will do this is by looking at what the text prophesied about him specifically in vv. 23-26.

And just remember, vv. 23-26 are an *interpretation* of vv. 9-14, so we will also be flipping between those two sections.

Look at v. 23 to begin:

23	<i>“In the latter period of their reign, When the transgressors have run <i>their course</i>, A king will stand, insolent and skilled in intrigue.</i> ”
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As the angel Gabriel gives the interpretation, this is the section where he addresses the identity and activity of the “small horn” that Daniel saw.

The first thing we find in v. 23 is that he is a king who will rise “*in the latter period of **their** reign.*”

Whose reign?

The verse right before this—v. 22—makes it clear that he is talking about the four kings (horns) over the four regions of the Greek empire.

Those four kings who parceled out the Greek empire [SLIDE].

Those four kings began four lines of kings that vied for power for the next couple centuries.

From those four kings, the two lines that became the most powerful were **the Seleucids** and **the Ptolemies**.

- *Ptolemies -- ruled over Egypt, Palestine, Arabia (the south)*
- *Seleucids --- controlled Syria, Babylonia (the east)**

And it was in the latter days of those kings that this man Antiochus IV rose to power.

Specifically, Antiochus the IV rose from the line of the Seleucids.

He was the 8th ruler from the Seleucid line and he ruled as king over the Syrian region of the Greek empire (the heartland is the Land of Israel).

Just a geography note—Israel was a VITAL piece of land for the flow of commerce and conquests. *You had to secure Israel!*

Indeed, as Antiochus IV would push for more power and control and territory, inevitably his focus would shift to controlling the Land of Israel.

Notice the geographical markers that v. 9 highlights about this “Small Horn”:

*“It grew exceedingly great toward **the south** (Egypt), toward **the east** (Persia, Parthia, Armenia), and the **Beautiful Land** (Israel).”*

But notice in v. 23 that Gabriel describes him as a king who is “*insolent and skilled in intrigue*”.

This accurately describes how Antiochus IV rose to power.

It was through underhanded moves and power grabs -- “skill and intrigue”.

See, he was NOT the rightful heir to the throne.

Antiochus was one of the sons of Antiochus III (aka Antiochus the Great).

But the rightful heir to the throne was not him, but his older brother Seleucus Philopater.

But shortly after his brother Philopater took the throne, he was murdered.

So then the next in line was Philopater’s son, Demetrius.

But in the midst of global conflicts, Demetrius was being held hostage in Rome as a negotiation piece.

Through bribery and flattery (skill and intrigue), Antiochus was able to weasel himself into the throne in Demetrius’s absence.

Thus he gained great power, but it was illegitimately gained through corruption and greed.

Notice how v. 24 highlights this: *“His power will be mighty, **but not by his own power...**”*

Antiochus took the throne in the year 175 BC and took to himself the name **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**.

Epiphanes is a Greek word that means “revelation” or “manifestation”.

By taking this title to himself, Antiochus was declaring that he viewed himself to be a god.

In fact, coins with his image had the words *“Theos Epiphanes”* which means “God Manifest”.

That’s how he viewed himself—as God manifest.

Isn’t that exactly what v. 11 said this “Small Horn” would do?

“It magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host (God)!”

v. 25 also puts it this way, *“He will magnify himself in his heart.”*

Many people in his day would use a Greek play on words and call him Antiochus Epimanes—which means, Antiochus “the mad man”.¹

Which gives you a good idea of what he was like.

One scholar notes,

*“It was his instability, verging upon insanity, which was to lead to the excessively harsh treatment meted out to the Jews by this otherwise energetic and capable ruler.”*²

¹ John Whitehorne, [“Antiochus \(Person\),”](#) in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 270.

² *Ibid.*, 270.

What did he want to do?

He was madly ambitious to HELLENIZE the world!

That means, to unify the very diverse world under into one culture—the Greek culture.

But this of course included *religion*.

Now, here's what's interesting. A great portion of the Jews **loved this**.

They wanted to become part of the modern Greek culture.

They were fine with giving up their religion and embracing the Greek religious pantheon.

So this set off basically a civil war among the Jews.

A fierce division between Jews who wanted to hold fast to the traditional Hebrew religion and culture and those Jews who wanted to *Hellenize*.

Much of the Jewish drama with Antiochus begins because of this civil conflict between the orthodox Jews and the Pro-Greek Jews.

Here's how it went down.³

In the early days of this civil conflict, there were two key Jewish figures.

The high priest named Onias III and *his brother* named Jason.

They were brothers, but fiercely opposed to each other.

Onias, the high priest, represented the orthodox Jews who wanted to maintain their religious purity.

His brother, Jason, was the leader of the pro-Greek movement.

³My summary of the story is sourced primarily in John Whitehorne's section on "[Antiochus \(Person\)](#)," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 270; also Dykstra course notes, and Miller's commentary.

But both of them had to ultimately operate under Antiochus' rule.

Here's where Antiochus's "skill and intrigue" (corruption) come back in to play.

Jason **bribed** Antiochus to make him the high priest in the place of Onias.

His bribe included money and the promise to make Jerusalem a Hellenized city.

So, Antiochus established Jason as the High Priest in place of his brother Onias.

And in the process, Onias was murdered.

This is a **key event** that really marks the beginning of Antiochus' opposition of the Jews.

This happened in **September of 170 BC** (*a key date to keep in mind*).

The murder of Onias and the establishment of Jason as Priest really took the conflict to the next level.

Over the next few years, the Jews would fight amongst themselves for power of the temple, and it would change hands back-and-forth.

This period would basically be a slow-cooking civil war between the Jews.

And during this time, Antiochus led his army to try to take more land from Egypt.

As Antiochus led his army to Egypt, he was met outside the city Alexandria by a Roman delegation.

You see, although Rome was not yet a superpower, by this point they were a major player in the game as an ally with a strong military.

And the Romans were being sent to keep Antiochus in check as allies of Egypt.

The Roman delegation commanded Antiochus to give up his campaign.

Antiochus asked for some time to consult and think it over.

But famously, the Roman Captain drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and said, you cannot step outside this circle until you give us an answer.

This event completely embarrassed and enraged Antiochus, who was force to return with his tail between his legs.

But why is that important?

Because Daniel 11:30 says that it was this embarrassment that enraged Antiochus and caused him to take out his rage on the Jews on his return.

When he returned to Jerusalem, he wanted to put an end to brewing civil war and uprising of Jews who were fighting for control of the Temple.

In his rage he attempted to exterminate the Jews and completely wipe out their religion.

He unleashed an army of 22,000 on Jerusalem.

They demolished the city walls, slaughtered countless Jews, and took over the temple.

Let's look back at our text now to see how this was prophesied.

Look at v. 24b:

<i>And he will destroy to an astonishing degree And succeed and do his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.</i>
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One historical account recorded that Antiochus in a one-day massacre slaughtered over 40,000 Jews.

But this was ultimately a clear attack against God.

That's what Antiochus really wanted to exterminate—the Jewish worship of God.

So he targeted the temple and outlawed Jewish religious practice with the death penalty.

v. 10 says that the sanctuary was thrown down.

Antiochus entered the temple, stopped the sacrifices, and desecrated it.

- Then, In his greatest act of sacrilege, he desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar, spreading the blood of the pig all over the temple, and forcing pork down the throats of the priests. (Dykstra)

This act is what v. 13 calls, “the transgression that causes desolation”.

But, God was still working in the face of this great evil.

This brings us to the story of **The Maccabean Revolt**.

And God would work deliverance through the remarkable story of a man named **Judas Maccabee** [SLIDE].

Judas Maccabeus was one of 5 sons born to a man named Mattathias.

Mattathias had been a powerful and passionate leader of the orthodox Jews resisting the pro-Greek movement.

As many Jews fled Jerusalem, Mattathias led a group from the town of Modiim, issuing the rallying cry, “*Whoever is for God, follow me!*”

After Mattathias died, Judas Maccabee took up the mantle of leadership.

And he took this leadership to the next level.

He was a passionate warrior—and a military genius.

He was convinced that it was worth his life to try to reclaim the temple and restore the worship of God.

He built an army that began engaging Antiochus in guerrilla warfare, starting in 167 BC.

Over the next three years, he won a series of key victories that bolstered his army and his reputation.

The first key victory involved Judas Maccabee killing a Greek governor called Apollonius.

Judas famously took his sword and fought with it throughout the rest of the Maccabean revolt.

Shortly after that victory, Judas defeated a Greek commander named Seron at the battle of Beth-Horon.

Then came the most important battle—the battle of Emmaus.

Here Judas was faced by a very skilled Greek commander named Gorgias.

This was Antiochus' answer to put an end to the Maccabean Revolt.

And the Maccabean army was overwhelmingly outnumbered.

But Judas used his knowledge of the terrain and a series of incredible tactics to outmaneuver and defeat Gorgias.

After this battle there is basically no one who could resist the Maccabean advance.

And Judas Maccabee led his army into Jerusalem and triumphantly reclaimed the temple and cleansed it and rededicated it!

This incredible day of victory occurred on **Dec 25, 164 BC** and became known as Hanukkah (which means “dedication”).

And here's how that date informs our understanding of Daniel 8.

Because going back **2,300 days** from the date the temple was cleansed results in a date of September 6, 170 BC.

The date that marks the beginning of Antiochus' persecution of the Jewish people.

So it corresponds exactly to what vv. 13-14 said would happen:

That the desolation of the temple would last for 2,300 days before the Temple would be cleansed.

Much of this is recorded in works of the Jewish historian Josephus.

It's also recorded in the books of the Maccabees.

You might have heard of 1 and 2 Maccabees.

These are books that are a part of a collection of writings called The Apocrypha.

Now, these are books that are included in the Roman Catholic bible but have been excluded from the 66 books in our Bibles.

They are rejected as **NOT** inspired by God.

The Apocryphal books include all sorts of bizarre, heretical teachings. They are filled with contradictions.

These books do not claim to be God's Word, and, importantly, the Hebrews rejected these books as NOT from God.

So, there is good reason to reject these books.

HOWEVER, the 1 and 2 Maccabees do contain some historical narrative that, just like reading Josephus, fills in the colors a bit.

I just want to share a few excerpts from the 1 Maccabees that show just how bad things got under Antiochus.

1 Maccabees 1: 20-24

Antiochus went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, 21 and entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the

candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, 22 and the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the vail, and the crowns, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off. 23 He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found. 24 And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly.

1 Maccabees 1:41-50

Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, ⁴² and every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. ⁴³ Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath. ⁴⁴ For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda, that they should follow the strange laws of the land,⁴⁵ and forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days: ⁴⁶ and pollute the sanctuary and holy people: ⁴⁷ set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts: ⁴⁸ that they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: ⁴⁹ to the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. ⁵⁰ And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die.

1 Maccabees 1:59-61

Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God. ⁶⁰ At which time, according to the commandment, they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised. ⁶¹ And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.

Horrific persecution of the Jews that was ultimately aimed at God.

Daniel makes it clear that it was an attack against God.

It was fueled by self-will and PRIDE!

Listen to v. 25

*"And through his insight
He will cause deceit to succeed by his hand;
And he will magnify himself in his heart,
And he will destroy many while they are at ease.
He will even stand against the Prince of princes,
But he will be broken without hands.*

- His Deception is successful ~ *he will cause deceit to succeed*
- His Drive is self-exaltation ~ *he will magnify himself in his heart*
- His Destruction is horrific ~ *he will destroy many while they are at ease*
- His Defiance is against God himself ~ *he will even stand against the Prince of princes*
- **BUT His Doom is sure ~ *BUT he will be broken without hands***

Here at the end of v. 25, there is a glimmer of hope.

This horrific figure would be broken without hands.

I believe this is a declaration of God's sovereignty.

That God would bring this figure to an end, without human agency.

And indeed, Antiochus was brought to an end in a pretty anticlimactic death.

It wasn't Judas Maccabee who killed him.

In fact, it wasn't even a person.

Shortly after the Maccabean Revolt, Antiochus died a slow, agonizing death on his bed.

Historians are not exactly sure the cause of his death, some say it was a bowel disease.

But according to 1 Maccabees 6, he died of grief after having been defeated by the Jews.

Listen to 1 Maccabees 6:8-16.

The scene here is that Antiochus has just received word that his troops fell to the Maccabeans

1 Maccabees 6:8-16

⁸ Now when the king heard these words, he was astonished and sore moved: whereupon he laid him down upon his bed, and fell sick for grief, because it had not befallen him as he looked for. ⁹ And there he continued many days: for his grief was ever more and more, and he made account that he should die. ¹⁰ Wherefore he called for all his friends, and said unto them, The sleep is gone from mine eyes, and my heart faileth for very care. ¹¹ And I thought with myself, Into what tribulation am I come, and how great a flood of misery is it, wherein now I am! for I was bountiful and beloved in my power. ¹² But now I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem, and that I took all the vessels of gold and silver that were therein, and sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judea without a cause. ¹³ I perceive therefore that for this cause these troubles are come upon me, and behold, I perish through great grief in a strange land. ¹⁴ Then called he for Philip, one of his friends, whom he made ruler over all his realm, ¹⁵ and gave him the crown, and his robe, and his signet, to the end he should bring up his son Antiochus, and nourish him up for the kingdom. ¹⁶ So king Antiochus died there in the hundred forty and ninth year.

So, just as God predicted in Daniel 8:25, Antiochus was *broken without hands!*

What's the point? God wins. ***Easily!***

In the face of horrific events that shake the world and would make someone question, "*where are you God?*"

His answer is I AM SOVEREIGN AND GOOD!

His answer is that He is always working!

And remember that ALL of this is a **prophetic prefiguring** (a double prophecy) that awaits future and final fulfillment in the Antichrist.

The Antichrist will persecute God's people just like Antiochus, only far worse.

He will set up a future abomination of desolation, but far worse.

But then Jesus Christ will return and 2 Thess. Says he will destroy Antichrist *with the breath of His mouth!* (cf. also Rev. 19:19-20).

So, this is a victory message – God will win! God will deliver His people!

But notice how Gabriel's interpretation of the vision ends and the effect it has on Daniel:

26 *"And what had appeared about the evenings and mornings*

Which has been told is true;

But as for you, conceal the vision,

For it pertains to many days in the future."

27 *Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I rose up again and did the king's work; but I was appalled at what had appeared, and there was none to make me understand it.*

[CONCLUSION]

- This vision about the future is TRUE!
- *We must take God at His Word*
- Difficult days were ahead for God's people
- But in the end, HE WOULD WIN!
- GOD IS SOVEREIGN and His Word must be TRUSTED!
- If He knows these things perfectly, how much more does He know our souls.
- We will each stand before this sovereign God!

[PRAY]